

February 26, 2020

Mr. Eric Blum
President
Oak Valley College
480 N. La Cadena
P.O. Box 787
Colton, CA 92324

Dear President Blum:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Oak Valley College (OVC) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting February 14, 2020. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Seeking Accreditation Visit 1 to Oak Valley College on October 9-11, 2019. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by Oak Valley College prior to the Seeking Accreditation Visit 1 and the institution's December 3, 2019 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleague Gary Miller, Board Member. Your comments were very helpful in informing the Commission's deliberations. The date of this action constitutes the effective date of the institution's new status with WSCUC.

Actions

1. Receive the Seeking Accreditation Visit 1 team report
2. Grant Candidacy for a period of five years
3. Schedule a Seeking Accreditation Visit 2 in fall 2021

The Commission commends Oak Valley College in particular for the following:

1. Offering a transformative educational opportunity for students in the California Inland Empire region by fostering a unified institutional commitment to providing an accessible, debt-free liberal arts education.
2. Demonstrating a commitment to student development and success in a safe, nurturing environment and providing mentoring, career preparation and job placement opportunities.
3. Supporting an active student body that engages in student government, participates in board of trustee meetings, and forms clubs that address student needs and align with the school's mission.
4. Creating a board of trustees composed of qualified stakeholders who are engaged and dedicated to the mission and long-term success of the institution.
5. Establishing a tightly-knit community with dynamic leadership, and a highly capable, hardworking team with a willingness to learn and grow.
6. Building a staff who have exceptional dedication to both prospective and active students, who demonstrate insightful understanding of the needs and challenges facing the student population they serve, and who are committed to continuous improvement and development.

The Commission requires the institution to respond to the following issues:

Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

The Commission finds that Oak Valley College has demonstrated evidence of compliance with Standard 1 at a level sufficient for Candidacy. In order to demonstrate compliance at a level sufficient for Initial Accreditation, the following CFRs require additional attention and development:

- CFR 1.2: Strengthen and propagate throughout the institution knowledge and recognition of student learning outcomes, outcome assessment, and the program review framework so that the attainment of educational objectives can be demonstrated.

Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objective through Core Functions

The Commission finds that Oak Valley College has demonstrated evidence of compliance with Standard 2 at a level sufficient for Candidacy. In order to demonstrate compliance at a level sufficient for Initial Accreditation, the following CFRs require additional attention and development:

- CFR 2.1; 2.4; 2.5: Undertake a thorough review of external sources (for example, core competencies rubrics and senior projects from aspirational institutions) and clearly define standards for the quality of student work that are appropriately rigorous for the degree.
- CFR 2.6; 2.10: Build the capacity to implement best practices in institutional research and outcome assessment among faculty and staff. Include professional development in methods and practices that are specific to higher education and foster ongoing discussions among faculty on assessment methodology and results.

Standard 3: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability

The Commission finds that Oak Valley College has demonstrated evidence of compliance with Standard 3 at a level sufficient for Candidacy. In order to demonstrate compliance at a level sufficient for Initial Accreditation, the following CFRs require additional attention and development:

- CFR 3.1; 3.3: Develop a multi-year faculty staffing plan with the goal of increasing diversity that includes qualifications, well-articulated hiring processes and practices. Allocate funds for robust faculty development and include the enhancement of cultural competency.
- CFR 3.4: Develop, in conjunction with the strategic plan, a three- to five-year advancement plan containing clearly defined financial goals and milestones.
- CFR 3.2; 3.7; 3.10: Strengthen and demonstrate shared governance by refining and implementing the faculty governance manual to include defined decision-making mechanisms, roles in shared governance and academic leadership and procedures, job

descriptions and qualifications, and the practice of academic freedom and performance review and hiring practices.

- CFR 3.9: Formalize and codify board governance practices including roles and responsibilities for board members and committees, the relationship of the board to the administration, presidential review and appointment processes, the process for review and approval of the executive roles and responsibilities, and regular review and development of the strategic plan.

Standard 4: Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement

The Commission finds that Oak Valley College has demonstrated evidence of compliance with Standard 4 at a level sufficient for Candidacy. In order to demonstrate compliance at a level sufficient for Initial Accreditation, the following CFRs require additional attention and development:

- CFR 4.3; 4.4: Formally adopt, refine, publish, provide training for, and further implement the college's quality assurance processes, policies and procedures in order to foster a culture of evidence. Include learning outcome assessment and academic and co-curricular program reviews with significant involvement and appropriate leadership from the faculty and other academic personnel.

Credit Hour Policy

A question was raised during the visit concerning OVC's compliance with credit hour policies and that concern has been addressed with the institution by WSCUC staff. The Commission finds that Oak Valley College has demonstrated evidence of compliance with federal credit hour requirements by indicating in its Credit Hour Policy a distribution of class room time and out-of-class time that represents an appropriate amount of work to achieve stated learning outcomes and is in keeping with its mission.

In keeping with WSCUC review protocols, the required subsequent review and Seeking Accreditation Visit 2 will focus primarily on those issues identified under each Standard (above) deemed to require additional development. (Please also reference the team report for additional context for the Commission's findings.) In keeping with WSCUC values, Oak Valley College should strive for ongoing improvement with adherence to all Standards of Accreditation and their associated CFRs to foster a learning environment that continuously strives for educational excellence and operational effectiveness.

In taking this action, the Commission confirms that Oak Valley College has met all the WSCUC Standards at a level sufficient to grant Candidacy. The Commission has scheduled the Seeking Accreditation Visit 2 for fall 2021.

Institutions granted the status of Candidate for Accreditation must use the following statement if they wish to describe that status publicly:

Oak Valley College has been recognized as a Candidate for Accreditation by WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC), 985 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 100, Alameda, CA 94501, 510.748.9001. This status is a preliminary affiliation with the

Commission awarded for a maximum period of five years. Candidacy is an indication that the institution is progressing toward Accreditation. Candidacy is not Accreditation and does not ensure eventual Accreditation.

Federal law requires that the WSCUC address and phone number appear in your catalog.

Institutions granted Candidacy are required to:

1. Submit an Annual Report in the format required by the Commission.
2. Keep the Commission informed of any significant changes or developments. Any proposed new degree programs, off-campus sites, online offerings, and/or changes in governance or ownership require review and approval through the Substantive Change process.
3. Pay Annual Membership Dues prorated from the date of this action. An Annual Dues statement will be sent under separate cover.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of Oak Valley College's governing board. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be widely distributed throughout the institution to promote further engagement and improvement and to support the institution's response to the specific issues identified in these documents.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that Oak Valley College undertook in preparing for and supporting this accreditation review. WSCUC is committed to an accreditation process that adds value to institutions while contributing to public accountability, and we thank you for your continued support of this process. Please contact me if you have any questions about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,



Jamienne S. Studley
President

JSS/lp

Cc: Reed Dasenbrock, Commission Chair
Betty Crocker, ALO
Tony Angelo, Board Chair
Members of the Seeking Accreditation Visit 1 team
Linda Petersen, Vice President
Mark Goor, Vice President